1 Introduction

Looking through the Lens of Black Immigrant Literacies

> Wakanda
> [wuh-kahn-duh]
> The name Wakanda is primarily a female name of Native American-Sioux origin that means Inner Magical Powers. Wakanda is also a fictional country created by Stan Lee and Jack Kirby for Marvel Comics – specifically the *Fantastic Four* and *Black Panther* series.
>
> BabyNames.com, n.d.

> Wakanda is known as the worship of nature among the indigenous North American peoples and is a fictional African country home to the Marvel Comics superhero the Black Panther.
>
> Collins English Dictionary, n.d.

> The movie *Black Panther* popularized a salute, known as Wakanda Forever, as a gesture of Black excellence around the world.
>
> Dictionary.com, n.d.

In 2018, *Black Panther*, a film with an all-Black cast including the late Chadwick Boseman as the star, sailed past *Titanic* to become the then number three title of all time in the US, and globally, the number ten title of all time (McClintock, 2018). As a mother and *enmigwé nwè* – the St. Lucian French Creole rendering of "*immigré noire*" or "Black immigrant[1]" – in the US, my daughter had been awaiting the movie incessantly for years. She would simply not stop talking about it and I knew that our tickets had to be purchased early on. I had seen the trailer for the movie and was fascinated by the authentic languaging of the king of Wakanda. It was thrilling to watch the "cloaked, technologically advanced nation in Africa" functioning as "home to the exotic metal vibranium, the source of Black Panther's powers" (McClintock, 2018). Needless to say, though, what I would witness while watching the film far exceeded any of my wildest imaginations – the accents, the languaging, the various cultural representations of Blackness, the kinky hair, the geographies, the humor, the gestures, the clothing, the bald heads, the music, the women, the beads, the love, the goodness of Africa, the kings, the chiefs, the Black saviors. These beautiful semiotics of what I posit later as *inonsans jan nwè* – St. Lucian French Creole for "*innocence noire*" or "Black innocence" – shone beautifully, wrapped up in Black Wakanda power (Madowo & Attiah, 2018).

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Black Panther surpassed my dreams, as it did my Black daughter's and that of so many millions with imagined futures for *libéwasyon jan nwè – libération noire* or Black liberation – across the world. It did so even as it reminded us of Black Panther as a movement, signaling a symbolic return to how the first modern Black political group in the US took up arms against white supremacy. Much like the Black Panther free school Breakfast Program in 1969 "fed tens of thousands of hungry [Black] kids," restoring innocence to children, "many of whom had never eaten breakfast before," this film, though fictional, dared recklessly, yet adeptly, to use languaging and semiotics. In doing so, it reinscribed Black innocence through Wakanda Forever – a symbol of unapologetic beauty, deep joy, thrilling warmth juxtaposed against a diasporic transgressiveness (Davies, 1995) emerging from the long-standing and abiding agency of Black love and truth. *Black Panther* spoke directly to Black immigrants too, bringing those whom we think of as Africans, African Americans, and Black immigrants together, to create, through the adept manipulation of languaging and literacies, a film grounded in beauty and infinitely defined by Black innocence. *Black Panther* touched deeply the lives of my daughter and me as it did Africans, African Americans, and millions of Black migrants as well as descendants of slaves across the globe. It inspired and asked that we should dare to reclaim – in solidarity with each other – the Black innocence that is rightfully ours and that lets our greatness shine through in the world. *Black Panther* challenged Black people, and indeed the world, to reinscribe an *innocence noire* that exists *sans* '(post)colonial' "white gaze" (Morrison, 2020) to reify the long-standing inherent inheritance of Black excellence. As Karen Attiah from the *Washington Post* rightly observed, "*Black Panther* [was] not just another superhero movie. Culturally, [it was] a revolutionary moment for the Black diaspora *and for white people too* [emphasis added]" (Madowo & Attiah, 2018).

I concur, because the follow up to *Black Panther* – *Black Panther: Wakanda Forever* – released in November 2022, proved to be "the [then] highest-grossing debut ever for the month of November" (Pallotta, 2022). *Black Panther: Wakanda Forever* extended the notion of solidarity among Black people, brought to life by the original *Black Panther* through languaging, to other cultures and races as well. In doing so, it exemplified how notions of *inonsans jan nwè* (defined and discussed later) hold opportunity for healing across Black, white, and all worlds. Invoking Wakanda, an Indigenous American Indian imaginary as the symbolic representation of what Dr. Arlette Willis, professor at the University of Illinois Urbana–Champaign, refers to as "transcendent literacy" (Willis, 2022, discussed later), *Black Panther* illustrated how languaging and semiotics at large function not only within the Black race to reflect excellence steeped in *innocence noire* but also operate as a mechanism for preserving solidarity across the multiple racial and cultural worlds of humanity.

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Given the design of *inonsans jan nwè* intricately undergirding *Black Panther* and *Black Panther: Wakanda Forever*, and the symbolism invoked by a return to Black Panther as a political movement, it is fitting that these films and the movement are prefigured here as a precursor to the painting of innocence presented in this book, steeped in a reclaiming of the lost translanguaging imaginaries of youth's *Black immigrant literacies* (see Smith, 2020b, for a detailed discussion of the framework). Beginning this book by appealing to the brilliance of Blackness reinscribed through *Black Panther* and imbued with the symbolism of *Black Panther: Wakanda Forever*, I undertake here an extension of the long-standing decolonizing global project designed to reinscribe *inonsans jan nwè*. Inviting a co-peering through the "literacies of migration" (Capstick, 2016) of Black immigrant youth – *literacies informed by, though not always the result of, transnationalism and migration* – I invite readers on a journey that dares to reclaim what I posit in this book as lost *imajinè inosan* – "imaginaries of innocence." *Imajinè inosan*, much like is invoked in Afrofuturism, "an aesthetic and an activist movement in the arts . . . [that interrogates] the intersections between speculative fiction, futurism, and African Diaspora culture" (Thomas, 2019), and in the 'unapologetically Indian' universe of Indofuturism (Chandran, 2023), has been vividly, unflinchingly, and historically present, via "*flourishing*" (Keyes, 2002), before the introduction of white gaze.

I choose to look through the lens of Black immigrant youth, whom I refer to as first-, second-, or third-generation immigrants to the US who identify as Black, who(se parents) migrate to the US from Africa, the Caribbean, or elsewhere. I do this because the Black immigrant perspective has functioned as a long-standing "prism" by scholars such as Dr. Roy Simon Bryce-Laporte for viewing American race relations (Bryce-Laporte, 1972, p. 32) and necessarily provides the basis for re-instantiating nuance surrounding notions of *inonsans jan nwè* in the increasingly and overtly racialized Black-white context of the US (Smith, 2021). Using the intersecting conceptions of multiliteracies, translanguaging, and raciolinguistics as a basis for this book, I explore the ways in which Black Caribbean youth used translanguaging to reflect a range of literacy practices by functioning as language and raciosemiotic architects (Flores, 2020; Smith, 2022d) as they used their Englishes (Kachru, 1992) as well as the broader range of their semiotic resources while racialized as Black immigrants in the US. In turn, I illustrate how contested ideologies embedded within institutions and societies surrounding race, semiotizing, and specifically languaging, as well as migration, influenced students' choices as architects. In undertaking this role, I show how the students reinscribe their Black innocence while leveraging their holistic literacies for *success* – a success reframed in this book by the degree to which youth experience overall well-being – "*flourishing*" (Keyes, 2002).

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As implicitly signaled earlier in the discussion about *Black Panther*, even as anti-Blackness functions globally as a long-standing system, there remains an often-invisible divisiveness among African immigrants, Afro-Caribbean immigrants, and African American peoples in the US. This dynamic has created a situation where oppression from without is exacerbated by tensions from within. There is therefore every reason to write this book at a time when the long-standing rhetoric designed to maintain a multi-pronged divisiveness among Black people continues to increase, if not merely hold sway. I write this book about the largely heterogeneous population of Black Caribbean immigrant youth in the US largely in response to such divisiveness, exploring the contradictions faced by these youth when they are portrayed as a (*new) 'model minority'* (Ukpokodu, 2018) and juxtaposed against their often inferiorly positioned African American peers. I wished to examine the challenges they encounter in meeting the resulting and expectant high academic and social standards imposed on their personhoods and which correspond with being a *designer immigrant* or a *model minority*. In doing so, I took the concept *model minority* to represent the academic success and upward social mobility of Black immigrant youth, when compared to other immigrant groups (i.e., Latinx, Asian American) and to their Black American peers (Wilson-Forsberg et al., 2018).

From a linguistic perspective in this book, being part of the *model minority* implies proficiency in a perceived oral and written standardized English (e.g., "Standard American English": SAE), which is often thought to be crucial to academic success and the basis for upward social mobility in the US, as it is elsewhere. Yet, it has been argued that Black immigrant youth can sometimes lack proficiency in standardized Englishes[2] despite being perceived as model minorities (Ukpokodu, 2018). In addition, the Englishes spoken by Black immigrant youth from the Caribbean, often referred to as "dialects" or "Creoles," have long been thought to operate along a continuum of English/Creole and are often differentially distanced from what is regarded as Standard English (e.g., SAE) (see Alim, 2004, for a raciolinguistic problematization of the notion of "standard"; see Smith & Warrican, 2021, for a problematization of the term "dialect"). And from a social perspective, being part of the *model minority* implies acculturation, including the understanding and incorporation of comportment rules set by the "white" majority culture and institutions in and beyond the US. Such comportment rules often include communicating orally and expressing one's thoughts in approximations of standardized Englishes and forms of behavior that may be different from those of the Black immigrant youth. In addition, Black immigrant youth in the US have to navigate many influences in defining their own identity: their English languages and home cultures, their parents' expectations for academic success, understanding decolonizing perspectives, becoming part of an 'inclusive'

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multicultural society, "becoming Black" (Ibrahim, 1999) as often experienced differently from their Black American peers, and becoming Black as "Other" in the US racialized society.

In the research study that undergirds this book, the translanguaging assets of youth's *inonsans jan nwè* that emerge as well as the tensions and contradictions within which they are subsumed are explored through phenomenological interviews, Black youth's own experiences, and in their own words. I achieve this goal through in-depth analysis of the historical trajectories and students' multiliteracies across named languages/Englishes. In doing so, I acknowledge that tensions arise from the *intersectionality* of being bi- and multicultural, bi- and multilingual, as well as bi- and multiracial. These tensions also become visible as the immigrant students use their Englishes and other languages to cross different contexts symbolically, physically, virtually, and otherwise, while identifying as Black. To acknowledge these tensions, as Alim (2005) has shown, is to acknowledge that "Black youth possess a broad range of speech styles" and thus, to extend examinations of the ways in which Black language represents the "whole range of styles within speakers' linguistic repertoires" (p. 194). Furthermore, to engage in this examination is to respond to the question posed by Alim (2005): "*If the Black speech community possesses a range of styles that are suitable for all of its communicative needs, then why the coercion and imposition of White styles?*" [emphasis added] (p. 195).

Emerging under the broader umbrellas of sociocultural approaches to literacy (Street, 1995), critical literacy (Luke, 2018; Willis, 2023), and critical applied linguistics (Pennycook, 2001), the research study undergirding this book is therefore anchored theoretically and intersectionally using the lenses of (a) translanguaging, taken to represent Black students' use of their entire linguistic repertoire that reflects the multiliterate assets students present through language and raciosemiotic architecture via transracialization (Alim, 2004; Flores, 2020; García & Wei, 2014; New London Group, 1996; Smith, 2022d); (b) a decolonizing perspective based on "critical dialectic pluralism" (Onwuegbuzie & Frels, 2013) that includes attention to institutionally informed racialized realities as well as demonstrated strategies and struggles used to overcome challenges and forms of oppression in Black students' individual lives (see Dei, 2000); and (c) raciolinguistics as well as a raciolinguistic perspective signaling an understanding that Black language is intertwined with race, and race with language, requiring a focus on institutional norms to address colonial legacies (Alim, 2004, 2016; Rosa & Flores, 2017).

In keeping with the conceptual framework above, I problematize a primary focus on *academic literacy success* often devoid of flourishing that tends to characterize Black immigrant and transnational youth. I thus contribute to

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filling a gap in the field by painting a more holistic portrait of the literacies and translanguaging practices of Black Caribbean immigrant youth. Three questions guided the study of Black Caribbean immigrant youth's literacies that undergirds this book:

(1) How do Black Caribbean English-speaking immigrant youth describe their literacies as represented in their historical trajectories across in- and out-of-school settings?
(2) How do Black Caribbean English-speaking immigrant youth describe their translanguaging, accompanied by their transsemiotic practices, as represented in their historical trajectories across in- and out-of-school settings?
(3) In what ways are contested ideologies surrounding race, language, and migration reflected in Black Caribbean English-speaking immigrant youth's descriptions of their literacies through translanguaging, as accompanied by their transsemiotic practices?

An understanding of how Black immigrant youth leverage their multiliteracies through translanguaging to present their holistic literacies in the context of institutions and societies that function based on raciolinguistic and raciosemiotic ideologies will extend the literature that highlights the strengths presented by immigrant and transnational students of Color. At the same time, an emphasis on the raciolinguicized and often "schizophrenic institutional" (Smith et al., 2022, p. 78) realities that require such responses from students will draw attention to the need for restructuring education and societies in ways that foster "linguistic equanimity" (Alim, 2004, p. 195). This understanding will also add to the body of research that highlights how Black Caribbean students' literacies of migration function both within and beyond classrooms to create new imaginaries of what literacies look like when enacted holistically (Darvin & Norton, 2014; De Costa, 2014; Jiménez et al., 2009; McLean, 2010; Rubenstein-Ávila, 2007; Skerrett, 2012, 2020; Watson et al., 2014).

Constructs and Definitions

In this book, I choose to draw on my Black innocence – *inonsans jan nwè* – instantiating my St. Lucian French Creole heritage as an intentional part of my translanguaging and literate practices. I do this unapologetically as a Black Caribbean immigrant to present the Black immigrant literacies of Caribbean youth. As such, certain key terms central to this book are presented from their inception, in St. Lucian French Creole. This Creole is often considered as a less recognized 'variety of language' for the purpose of official schooling. However, much like more acceptable standardized forms such as French and English, it does legitimately convey notions about languaging of Black people in ways that reflect a distinct nuance associated with their "*racialized*

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entanglements" (Smith, 2022c; see also Pennycook, 2021). For the purpose of discussion in this book, the following constructs are operationalized as follows. In certain instances, I intentionally emphasize how named languages such as St. Lucian French Creole, French, and English variably portray the meaning embedded in these constructs.

(1) **Alien:** As recently as 2020, the term "alien" was used by the US government to refer to "an individual who is not a U.S. citizen or U.S. national" (Mattix, 2018). Aliens could become permanent residents or be naturalized as US citizens. According to the IRS (Mattix, 2018), "an alien [was someone] who entered the United States illegally without the proper authorization and documents, or who entered the United States legally and has since violated the terms of his or her visa or overstayed the time limit. An undocumented alien [was] deportable if apprehended."

(2) **Black Innocence:** Also known in St. Lucian French Creole as "*inonsans jan nwè*," this term is used in this book to refer to the inherent brilliance of those racialized as Black by a failure to acknowledge *white gaze*, made visible in spaces where institutional expectation meets individual revelation via unapologetic diasporic transgressiveness (Davies, 1995) of Eurocentric norms. This innocence operates in all facets of society oblivious to and regardless of Eurocentric mechanisms operating to blind it and adeptly pursues "flourishing" (Keyes, 2002) based on a deeply entrenched commitment to life's purpose absolutely *sans attention* to white gaze.

(3) **Black Semiolingual Innocence:** The inherent brilliance in the literacies of the Black invoked by a failure to acknowledge *white gaze*, made visible through unapologetic semiolingual diasporic transgressiveness (Davies, 2013). This innocence operates oblivious to and regardless of Eurocentric mechanisms operating to blind it and adeptly leverages semiotics, with a specific focus on languaging, toward the goal of "flourishing" (Keyes, 2002) based on a deeply entrenched commitment to life's purpose *sans attention* to white gaze.

(4) **Englishes:** The term "Englishes" refers to the many different varieties of English that represent a plurality, variation, and change within the English language as a norm (Kachru, 1992). Englishes represent the interweaving of both standardized (e.g., Standard American English) and non-standardized (e.g., African American English) forms. I use '*non-standardized Englishes*' (e.g., African American Vernacular English, Jamaican Creole, Trinidadian English-lexicon Creole) here to refer to Englishes that do not adhere to what has been determined to be a 'Standard English' within a given context. Linguists refer to these variations as dialects, or New Englishes (Kirkpartrick & Deterding, 2011) and to their counterparts,

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what I and others have labeled, '*standardized Englishes*,' as those that have been typically adopted for use in English literacy classrooms (e.g., Standard Jamaican English, Trinidadian Standard English, Standard American English).

(5) **Imaginaries:** A construct representing an imagining of "alternatives to development [that] summons a more substantive and non-linear understanding of human life and well-being – a bringing together of both material and non-material human needs" (Mahmud, 1999, p. 33). Mahmud (1999) has observed that "what is ultimately at stake is the transformation of the political, economic, and institutional regimes of truth production that have defined the era of development. This, in turn, requires changes in institutions and social relations, openness to various forms of knowledge and cultural manifestations, new styles of participation, and greater community autonomy over the production of norms and discourses" (p. 34). The notion of imaginaries represents such "construction [s] of collective imaginaries capable of reorienting social and political action" (Mahmud, 1999, p. 34).

(6) **Imajinè Inosan:** Informed by the notion of collective imaginaries (Mahmud, 1999), imajinè inosan functions as the Haitian Creole for "*imaginaries of innocence*," also appearing in this book using the St. Lucian French Creole – "*entépwétasyon sosyal di inosans*" – and in English – "*imaginaries of innocence*" – representing envisioned pasts, presents, and futures as informed by the structure of Sankofa (Temple, 2010) that have been long-standing among people of Color and are intentionally invoked by the ability of the individual to function *sans attention* to whiteness. This functioning *sans* white gaze emerges alongside "the agenda of radical critique . . . [which] devises [a] means of liberating postcolonial societies from the imaginary of development and . . . [lessens] their dependence on the episteme of modernity" (Mahmud, 1999, p. 34). Imajinè inosan represents the "collective imaginaries capable of reorienting social and political action . . . to deploy non-reductionist and non-teleological notions of politics and economics, and, on the other hand, to facilitate participatory and democratizing potentials of . . . new social subjects" (p. 34). Imajinè inosan thus refers to "imagining alternatives to development [that] summons a more substantive and non-linear understanding of human life and well-being – a bringing together of both material and non-material human needs" *sans attention* to white gaze (Mahmud, 1999, p. 33).

(7) **Innocence:** Also "inonsans" in St. Lucian French Creole, innocence is taken to refer to the inherently imbued capacity of institutional-individual spaces created by Black students which operate legitimately *sans attention* to white gaze, juxtaposed against and disrupting the long-standing,

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societally imposed "Black abstraction" that has for so long operated legally and otherwise to uphold an imagined "White innocence" (Ross, 1990). A defined marker of such innocence is a desire for flourishing in solidarity with others. Related terminologies such as "linguistic innocence" refer to the instantiation of such spaces through languaging and "Black linguistic innocence" to the capacity of Black students to reflect such instantiations.

(8) **Inonsans Jan Nwè:** St. Lucian French Creole for "*Black innocence*," which also appears in this book via French as "*innocence noire*" or via English as "*Black innocence*," "*inonsans jan nwè*" is an imaginary that liberates the mind, through "transcendent literacy" as proposed by Willis (2022), to consider the capacities including holistic languaging and literacies of Black children and youth – pre-white gaze – uninhibited and unassailed by the expectations of the colonizer.

(9) **Language Architecture:** Language architecture is the manipulation of language "for specific purposes" which frames students as "already understanding the relationship between language choice and meaning through the knowledge they have gained via socialization into the cultural and linguistic practices of their communities" (Flores, 2020, p. 25).

(10) **Languaging:** Languaging, for the purposes of this study, refers to inextricable links between students' language use and personhood (Cowley, 2017).

(11) **Language Ideology:** Language ideology, sometimes referred to as "beliefs" and "approaches" about language, represents the ideas, constructs, notions, and representations derived from individuals' social practices with language across multiple spheres, local and global (Razfar, 2012). Language ideology can be based on standardized language where it represents "a bias toward an abstract, idealized homogenous spoken language, . . . imposed and maintained by dominant bloc institutions . . . and drawn primarily from the spoken language of the upper middle class" (Lippi-Green, 1997, p. 64) or it may denote the opposite – ways of thinking about non-standardized language forms. Language ideology may also function bidirectionally where ways of thinking about language by one group impact ways of thinking about language by another group and vice versa (De Costa, 2010). An individual's ideology about language can be influenced by critical language awareness (CLA), which results when one is aware of the interplay between their use of language and the power associated with this use (Alim, 2005), by one's experience with linguistic discrimination (Tollefson, 2011) made visible in the implicit and explicit negative actions of others toward their use of language (Alim, 2005) and by linguistic profiling visible in the negative responses of others to one's auditory cues (Baugh, 2003).

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(12) **Literacies:** Literacies refer to the multiple ways of making meaning from and with texts – multiliteracies – that are "deictic" (Leu et al., 2017, p. 1; New London Group, 1996), and reflect the use of multiple sources and successful navigation of meaning-making via the Internet (Leu et al., 2017).

(13) **Liminality:** Liminality is the variation in the transformative processes of those engaging third space characterized by a lack of certainty, willingness to be tentative, and surrender to compromise – based on the theory of hybridity (Bhabha, 1994).

(14) **Multiliteracies:** The notion of multiliteracies presumes that "metalanguages [are used] to describe and interpret the design elements of different modes of meaning" (New London Group, 1996, p. 83). Through these modes of meaning-making – tactile, gestural, spatial, visual, written, audio, linguistic, and synesthesia – youth negotiate a range of discourses by integrating "a variety of texts forms associated with information and multimedia technologies" (Kalantzis & Cope, 2012; New London Group, 1996, p. 61). Often used interchangeably with the term "new literacies," the notion of multiliteracies presumes that learners use a variety of techniques in various forms to infer meaning such as leveraging various semiotic resources to obtain information. These may include text messages, blogging, social networking websites, and listening to or reading information from electronic devices (Moss & Lapp, 2010).

(15) **Raciolinguistic Ideologies:** These are negative ways of thinking developed by language speakers (Flores & Rosa, 2015). Through these ideologies, the appropriation of imagined (or idealized) as well as actualized linguistic practices by racial populations based on a supposed standard English that is premised on a monoglossic language ideology does not constitute the sole basis used by others to determine the advancement of racial groups in our dominant system. The focus is on the white listener, how the language used by the racialized student is heard or interpreted by the white listening subject who "hears" or "interprets" from the dominant standardized English perspective (Flores & Rosa, 2015). Flores and Rosa (2015) observe that raciolinguistic ideology represents the privileging of "dominant white perspectives on the linguistic and cultural practices of racialized communities" regardless of the efforts of persons of Color to approximate the accepted language forms (pp. 150–151). This positioning, in turn, is used to construct racialized populations such as Latinos and Blacks in ways that are inferior and illegitimate, *regardless* of whether they use or attempt to use standardized linguistic (and English) practices.

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(16) **A Raciolinguistic Perspective:** A raciolinguistic perspective addresses raciolinguistic ideology by articulating premises undergirding this ideology. Elements of a raciolinguistic perspective are "(i) historical and contemporary co-naturalizations of race and language as part of the colonial formation of modernity; (ii) perceptions of racial and linguistic difference; (iii) regimentations of racial and linguistic categories; (iv) racial and linguistic intersections and assemblages; and (v) the contestation of racial and linguistic power formations" (Rosa & Flores, 2017, p. 3).

(17) **Raciosemiotic Architecture:** Described in St. Lucian French Creole and presented in this book also as "*imaj ògannizasyon wapò ant sé diféwan was*," this term extends the notion of "language architecture" as proposed by Flores (2020) to illustrate how semiotics and multimodality are mediated by power relations, many of which are premised on the racialized structures that are encoded in what it means to make meaning with texts that are often nonlinguistic in nature. Students functioning as "*raciosemiotic architects*" "manipulat[e multiple modes] for specific purposes" (Flores, 2020, p. 25) while engaging racialization based on how they understand choice and meaning of multiple modalities to be related based on their socialization into cultural, linguistic, and racial community practices (see Smith, 2022d).

(18) **Semiolingual Innocence:** This term refers to the capacity of youth, no matter who they are, to fail to acknowledge or to leverage *white gaze* in its numerous forms in their semiotics as they do in their languaging, thus (re)inscribing their innate capacity through semiotics and languaging for flourishing through their holistic literacies. Semiolingual innocence operates based on a deeply entrenched commitment to life's purpose *sans attention* to (by Blacks, whites, or peoples of Color) or a leveraging of white gaze (by whites, Blacks, people of color, or people who 'pass as white'). Acknowledging the broad range of semiotics but also attending closely to languaging (i.e., hereafter *semiolingual*), the heuristic of semiolingual innocence is presented in this book as emerging from the literacies and languaging of Black immigrant youth. In turn, it is proposed as a pathway to reinscribe the innocence of all youth. Semiolingual innocence is presented as being characterized by eight mechanisms, each of which can be considered as an "*F*" of semiolingual innocence:

   (a) **Flourishing:** Semiolingual innocence positions teaching for "*flourishing*" (Keyes, 2002) with translanguaging and transsemiotizing, discarding archaic notions of success (*Flourishing*).

   (b) **Purpose:** Semiolingual innocence positions teaching solely for deeply entrenched *purpose* such that children and their parents hold the right to determine the codes undergirding E-languages and E-semiotics needed to foster life pursuits (*Flattening*).

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(c) **Comfort:** Semiolingual innocence positions teaching for subconscious elicitation of emotion through immersion in *spaces of comfort* as a basis for cultivating "animation" (Orellana, 2015) via imagination through translanguaging and "transsemiotizing" (*Feeling*).
(d) **Expansion:** Semiolingual innocence positions teaching as an opportunity for leveraging metalinguistic, metacultural, metaracial, and metasemiotic understanding that expands 'monolingual,' 'monocultural,' and 'monoracial' as well as all repertoires (see Smith, 2022a, on transraciolinguistics) (*Fostering*).
(e) **Paradox:** Semiolingual innocence positions teaching to instantiate intentional paradoxical confrontations toward the cultivation of a "*both-and*" ethos, critical for emerging through the dialectic of 'oppressed' versus 'oppressor,' via flourishing (Freire, 1970/2000; Smith, 2013) (*Finessing*).
(f) **Originality:** Semiolingual innocence positions teaching to prioritize communicative capacities through translanguaging and transsemiotizing approaches to comprehension that preserve *originality of meaning* steeped in cultural indigeneity, regardless of the source (*Factualizing*).
(g) **Interdependence:** Semiolingual innocence positions teaching for intraracial and interracial interdependence, recognizing the shared humanity of all peoples (*Friending*).
(h) **Imagination:** Semiolingual innocence positions teaching for harnessing the imagination to solve local and global problems currently assailing the currents and futures of the world (*Facilitating*).

(19) **Semiotizing/Transsemiotizing/Translanguaging:** Translanguaging is used in this book to refer to the use of various E-languages embedded within the linguistic repertoire for meaning-making and transsemiotizing to the adept use of various elements of the semiotic repertoire for meaning-making. García and Wei (2014) advanced a holistic view of linguistic and semiotic resources, via translanguaging, where a "trans-semiotic system with many meaning-making signs, primarily linguistic ones . . . combine to make up a person's semiotic repertoire (p. 42)." The notion of transsemiotics, which draws from Halliday's (2013) proposition of "trans-semiotics," undergirds the construct as proposed by García and Wei and the development of the notion of the idea of 'trans-semiotizing' as dynamically coordinating a range of linguistic and semiotic resources (e.g., languages, gestures, facial expressions, sounds, visual images) to co-create meaning and thereby share and expand communicative repertoires (Lin, 2019). In this book, I adopt a "both-and" approach to translanguaging that draws from the ideological notion of an individual linguistic repertoire – I-languages (García & Kleyn, 2016; MacSwan, 2017; Smith,

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2020a, 2020b, 2020c) – while also considering the *imposition of* external, abstract, and idealized systems – E-languages – during the process of translanguaging with one's linguistic repertoire (Cowley, 2017; King, 2017; MacSwan, 2017). This "both-and" approach transcends the prevailing and persistent oppressor vs. oppressed dynamic railed against by Paulo Freire (Freire, 1970/2000) from which he envisioned the emergence of "a new being: no longer oppressor nor longer oppressed, but human in the process of achieving freedom" (Freire, 1970/2000, p. 1). Similarly, I adopt a "both-and" approach to transsemiotizing that draws from the ideological notion of an individual semiotic repertoire – "*I-semiotics*" – while also considering the imposition of external abstract and idealized systems – E-semiotics – during the process of transsemiotizing with one's semiotic repertoire as is often visible through notions such as "raciosemiotics" (i.e., the influence of race on the coordination of semiotic resources; see Smalls, 2020).

(20) **Third Space:** Conceived of theoretically as a function of post-coloniality, "third space" denotes how oppositional positions or those that are binary come together to constitute merged dichotomies (Bhabha, 1994; Soja, 1996). Third space has been represented as an "in-between" hybrid space for language (Gutiérrez, 2008) where students' "first space" (home life and sociocultural experiences) comes into contact with a "second space" (school curriculum and discipline-specific language and learning) and functions as a site of boundary crossing across cultures and between a home language and the second language of school (Moje et al., 2004).

Significance

Attention to raciolinguistics (Alim, 2016) and its relationship to literacy practices continue to undergo significant global expansion in the past decade. From increasing foci on the relationship between race and language, language in literacy in countries such as Britain (e.g., Cushing, 2022, Cushing & Carter, 2022; Cushing & Snell 2022), and Finland (e.g., Mustonen, 2021), as well as the immigrant practices of Mongolians in Australia (e.g., Dovchin, 2019a) to languaging on the African continent (e.g., Vigouroux, 2017), in Korea (e.g., Park, 2022), in the US (e.g., Alim & Smitherman, 2012), and in the Canadian society (e.g., Ibrahim 1999; Shizha et al., 2020), the "twining" of race and language (Rosa & Flores, 2017) continues to be explored across populations of the *Majority World* (Pence & Marfo, 2008). These conversations function internationally as a response to a new wave of global racial reckoning spurred on, in part, by the viral video of the murder of George Floyd. For instance, many respond to long-standing descriptions of the implicit as well as explicit

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structure of racialization undergirding education such as *How the West Indian Child Is Made Educationally Subnormal in the British School System* by Bernard Coard, which featured filmmaker Steve McQueen's 2020 award-winning television series, *Small Axe* (Coard, 1971). In such responses, it is increasingly and vividly clear how racial injustice functions systemically and undeterred within institutions across the globe.

The emphasis of scholars on the interrelationship between race and language has, as a global project, placed the fields of literacy and language, squarely for what seems like the first time, in a dynamic where the pervasive sweeping of race under the proverbial rug is perhaps no longer a viable option. Operating as a stark reminder of the obscurity of repeated calls for a centering of race and racialization in literacy research (e.g., Willis, 1995, 2002, 2003, 2008, 2012, 2015, 2019), this emphasis has often been absent from widely disseminated publications such as the World Migration Report (e.g., McAuliffe & Khandria, 2020) and largely invisible in agendas such as that of the Organization for Economic Development (OECD). The seeming attempt to currently center race is visible in numerous associations' overt response to the call to undo centuries of harm to Black peoples. For instance, educational organizations such as the American Psychological Association (2021) have highlighted how the overlooking of racialization has caused undue harm to people of Color, and specifically Black peoples, apologizing for this history and outlining resolutions. Similarly, anthropological organizations such as the American Anthropological Association, through its Language and Social Justice Task Force, have recently produced a volume that synthesizes how patterns of communication are directly related to creating more just societies. By the same token, literacy, language, and educational organizations such as the Literacy Research Association (LRA), American Association of Applied Linguistics (AAAL), American Educational Research Association (AERA), National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE), and others increasingly point to the need to address racialized inequalities that function at the intersections of people's lives.

Looking back historically, it is evident that as early as 1961, the linguistic differences based on race – between Negroes and whites – have been a key area of study in countries such as the US. For instance, Barth (1961) described back then distinctions between the language of Blacks and whites. The author highlighted the ways in which languaging created status challenges associated with how Blacks perceived the self, their relationships with each other, and their relationships with whites. It was observed that a stark difference existed between how social experiences defined the meanings attached to words by Blacks as compared to whites. Extending this focus, Rickford and Rickford (1980/2015) later examined how gestures functioned differentially between Blacks and whites in the US. The authors pointed out, decades ago, that gestures functioned differently in the speech of American whites as compared to Blacks (see

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Rickford & Rickford, 1980/2015). They documented how semiotic tools such as "cut[ing] the eyes" and "suck[ing] the teeth" are used routinely by Blacks in Caribbean countries, representations that I acknowledge are visible in spaces such as my homeland, St. Lucia. In turn, they illustrated that these were not reflected by white people, thereby creating a challenge for their understandings of the meanings of these gestures when white people experienced them. Referring to these as "African survivals," Rickford and Rickford (1980/2015) recognized the need to explore, more intently, the ways in which gestures such as these are distinctly representative of Blacks in America. The authors also highlighted how these gestures functioned across the Caribbean, Africa, and the US, laying the foundation for later research explorations.

The Black diasporic project of addressing racialization in language has since continued to grow for many decades, both implicitly and explicitly. It has operated though, very often, on the periphery of mainstream language and literacy research and instruction, a global project largely dominated by Eurocentric normative practice. For instance, following the *Students' Right to Their Own Language Resolution*, the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) Conference on College Composition and Communication copublished a landmark volume in 2008, edited by Deborah Holdstein, designed to broadly address languaging, African American Englishes, and the pedagogies of literacy needed to meet the needs of Black students and other students of Color in schools (*SRTOL*; Conference on College Composition and Communication, 1974). During the same period, scholars such as Gundaker (1998) were adamant in their challenging of monolithic notions of literate practice based on the languaging of Black peoples by documenting how creolization and vernacular language practices were used and leveraged across the US and the West Indies. Gundaker highlighted nuances present in the adept languaging of Black peoples across the diaspora, raising questions about dichotomies existing in our tendency to ascribe certain linguistic capacities to Black people (i.e., "inferiority") while overlooking their capacity for others (i.e., "superior" Eurocentric linguistic norms). Though significant and potentially paradigm-shifting for the field, scholarship such as this has largely remained on the sidelines of literacy research and instruction. This has occurred despite the persistence of authors to highlight the complex and adept languaging of Black peoples as opposed to an imposed monolithic conceptualization, and to characterize the racialization that operates at its center.

For Black Caribbean peoples, the often-peripheral functioning of the intricacies of languaging and race, made possible largely through notions such as Edward Said's Orientalism (Said, 1978) and Paulo Freire's invitation to transcend the "oppressor vs. oppressed" dynamic in education (Freire, 1970/2000), has operated primarily as a 'postcolonial' project. This postcolonial

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project remains visible in both the Majority World West Indian context (e.g., Bartlett, 2012; Bristol, 2012; Devonish & Carpenter, 2020; Thompson et al., 2011; Warrican, 2005) and also, globally, within Minority World countries such as the UK and the US. Joining scholars such as Cooper (2020), Ibrahim (1999, 2019), Nero (2001), and Skerrett (2006), who have drawn attention to differentiated pedagogies, experiences, and epistemologies necessary due to the languaging of Caribbean peoples in North America and in the US, and others such as Franklin (2013) and Wallace (2017a, 2017b, 2023), who have undertaken the broader and global centering of race in examining the responses of Black Caribbean peoples to educational systems in the UK, this book comes at a time when it is increasingly recognized that a failure to address the interrelationship of language and race in mainstream education, and literacy more specifically, represents, in effect, a moral intention to do harm (see Anya, 2016; Willis et al., 2022). We see a recognition of this failure in the documentation of the counseling needs of Caribbean students in the US that fosters healthy adjustment and the urgency of addressing linguistic diversity of immigrants as a determinant of healthcare (e.g., Morrison & Bryan, 2014; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2022). We see it also in observations of the "twining" of language and race in the life of the Black immigrant for human "flourishing" (Keyes, 2002; Rosa & Flores, 2017; Smith et al., 2022) and comparative analyses of the role of race in the experiences of Black migrants across Britain, France, and the Netherlands and the US (Foner, 1985). Taken together, these acknowledgments represent an increasing intention to discuss variations offered in the literacies and languaging of Black immigrants that correspond to the need for moving beyond restricted pedagogies of schooling. They also demonstrate the commitment to instantiating novel imaginaries steeped in solidarity and community while locating the pervasively adverse response to such variations within their structural and foundational context, which is race.

Responding to this need, this book complements my current and previous research in the area of Black immigrant literacies and Englishes, which intersectionally revolves around race, language, and immigration (e.g., Smith, 2020a, 2020b, 2020c, 2022a, 2022b). The book uniquely extends current insights in the field of literacy by (a) centralizing race in conjunction with language to examine the literacy practices of Black Caribbean immigrant youth (Nalubega-Booker & Willis, 2020; Smith, 2019a); (b) using translanguaging and transsemiotics via a "both-and" model as a function of raciolinguistics, raciosemiotics, and a raciolinguistic perspective to clarify the multiliteracies of youth who are Black, immigrants from the Caribbean, and who use Englishes and associated semiotic resources (Alim, 2004, 2016; Alim et al., 2016; New London Group, 1996; Rosa & Flores, 2017; Smith, 2023a); (c) bridging gaps between notions such as "academic" and "invisible"

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literacies and between "academic" and "home" languages through examination of the "holistic literacies" of Black Caribbean immigrant youth (Smith, 2020b); (d) providing novel insights about how the constructs of race, language, and immigration intersect as a function of "transracialization" (Alim, 2016) and "transraciolinguistics" (Smith, 2022a) to broadly extend understandings of literacy in relation to racialized, and specifically, Black language speakers crossing boundaries; and (e) drawing upon a decolonizing interpretive lens to do so (Dei, 2000; Onwuegbuzie & Frels, 2013). More succinctly, the unique contribution of this book to the field can be found in its presentation of eight mechanisms to advance the holistic literacies of youth and in its promise of *semiolingual innocence*, described at length in Chapter 6.

Leading up to the insights in this book have been numerous collaborative endeavors undertaken with colleagues including symposia at the American Educational Research Association (AERA) conference such as the 2020 session, "Clarifying the Role of Race in the Literacies and Englishes of Black Immigrant Youth," undertaken in collaboration with Drs. Eliza Braden, Kisha Bryan, the late Benjamin (Benji) Chang, Bryan Hotchkins, Lydiah Kiramba, Michelle Knight-Manuel, and Vaughn Watson. Similarly, scholarship has been generated closely with colleagues to advance collaborations such as the 2021 AERA session "Critical Literacy for Racial Justice: Equity through Intersectionality," presented in conjunction with national and international scholars such as Drs. Joel Berends, Alecia Beymer, Awad Ibrahim, Gwendolyn McMillon, Vaughn Watson, Arlette Willis, and Rahat Zaidi. Also serving as a precursor to this book have been insights engaged in community with scholars racialized as Black in the US such as Drs. Allison Skerrett, Lakeya Omogun Lakeya Afolalu (Omogun), Cheryl A. McLean, Vaughn Watson, Michelle Knight-Manuel, Eurydice Bauer, Lenny Sanchez, S. Joel Warrican, Kisha Bryan, Lydiah Kiramba, James Alan Oloo, Kendra Nalubega-Booker, Arlette Willis, Eliza Braden, Ayanna Cooper, and Bryan Hotchkins in the 2020 *Teachers College Record (TCR)* guest-edited special issue titled, "Clarifying the Role of Race in the Literacies of Black Immigrant Youth." Other collaborative pathways through which this work has emerged have been discussions with Dr. Aria Razfar in advancing the centering of race in immigration through the 2022 *International Journal of Qualitative Studies (IQSE) in Education* special issue, "Algorithm of Love: Insights from Immigrant Literacies and Narratives," which highlighted scholarly insights from educators such as Drs. Eliza Braden, Gloria Boutte, Vaughn Watson, Bryan Hotchkins, Lenny Sanchez, Eurydice Bauer, and Rahat Zaidi. My in-depth discussions in community with Dr. Ramón Martínez as an LRA STAR Fellow, collaborations during the COVID-19 pandemic with scholars such as Drs. Arlette Willis and Gwendolyn McMillon undergirding the book *Affirming Black Students' Lives and Literacies: Bearing Witness*, and with Drs. Vaughn

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Watson and Michelle Knight-Manuel underlying the forthcoming *Educating African Immigrant Youth*: *Schooling and Civic Engagement in K–12 Schools* have informed my evolving understandings as I came to this work. So did more recently completed collaborations with scholars such as Drs. Teresa Cremin, Natalia Kucirkova, and Diane Collier surrounding the guest-edited *Literacy* special issue, "Literacy for Social Justice: Charting Equitable Global and Local Practices" (2023) and with Drs. Vaughn Watson and Ayanna Brown surrounding the guest-edited *Research in the Teaching of English (RTE)* special issue, "Diasporic Tellings of Race, Literacies, Joys, and Geographies in the Lives of Black African Immigrant Youth" (forthcoming).

Extending insights explored thus far, *Literacies of Migration: Translanguaging Imaginaries of Innocence* paints a vivid portrait of Black Caribbean immigrant youth, whose Englishes are racialized, linguicized, and raciosemiotized even while their literacies are renegotiated across their countries of origin and the US. Evidence is presented of how they use their longstanding acumen with translanguaging to thrive as they draw from their unique individual linguistic repertoires – *translanguaging imaginaries of innocence.* In doing so, I offer an intricate view of how they reinscribe their *inonsans jan nwè*, reflecting an empowerment to knowingly engage with the tensions created between their attempts to draw from these repertoires and the ways in which external, idealized, and abstract systems work to impede, limit, and interrupt this process. By considering translanguaging as well as transsemiotizing for clarifying Black Caribbean immigrant literacies while also foregrounding race and racialized Englishes, I invite scholars, educators, teachers, and policymakers to create institutional mechanisms for empowering Black immigrant youth, their teachers, and their parents. Educational stakeholders are invited to do this given that students engage with tensions arising from translanguaging that rob them of what I describe as their '*linguistic innocence*' – known in French as *innocence linguistic* – the revelation of which may be entirely novel.

The lens of Black immigrant literacies as a basis for this book provides an avenue for challenging current dichotomous discourses regarding achievement that continue to pit *underperforming* African Americans against high achieving *model minority* Black immigrant youth from African countries, Caribbean countries, and beyond. Daring to disrupt the long-held and erroneous perception that to single out and discuss Black immigrants in the US is to somehow engage in divisive rhetoric, I challenge, instead, the idea that all Black immigrant youth as opposed to their racialized and immigrant US peers are *academic prodigies.* This myth often arises from the typical and meritocratic notion of these youth as *designer immigrants* or a *new model minority* who reflect *success.* In choosing to intentionally silence the invisibility of this Black population in the US which has functioned for so long under the guise of Black

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solidarity while subtly reinforcing the divisive goals of white supremacy, I show how racial discrimination occurs against the languaging and personhoods of Black immigrant youth in ways that are similar to their African American peers.

To achieve these goals, I draw partly from non-Eurocentric lenses which are increasingly needed to present decolonized research findings about people of Color. In doing so, I overtly meet, head-on, long-standing and increasing debates arising from such distinctions between Black immigrant and Black American youth and the promotion of raciolinguistic and raciosemiotic ideologies that affect the ability of these subpopulations to use their literacies of migration, in solidarity within racial groups, for mutual support. One such example is evident in the recent discussion surrounding the questions of Cynthia Enrivo's casting as Harriet Tubman given her lineage as a British actress of Nigerian (and not African American) descent (ABC News, 2020). Silencing the invisibility of these strained relations among Black subpopulations in the US while also acknowledging, with bravery, the heterogeneity within them, I encourage the field, by considering such examples as youth's voices in this book, to consider how a vision of holistic literacies can serve as a basis for understanding, examining, and leveraging the strengths reflected in Black Caribbean immigrant literacies.

Choosing to use the lens of Black immigrant literacies in this book can help to elicit information about Black immigrant youth's literacy practices and Englishes in their individual life's trajectories across their home countries and the US with the goal of helping them to acknowledge their Black innocence. Doing so can also allow them to identify their own process of negotiating tensions, as opposed to creating a standardized model that seeks to be representative of all Black immigrant youth. Through *Literacies of Migration*, I transdisciplinarily join, more broadly, scholars such as Bartlett et al. (2018), Cooper (2020), Dovchin (2020), Foner (1985), Fordham & Ogbu (1986), Ibrahim (1999, 2019), Kumi-Yeboah (2018), McLean (2010), Mwangi & English (2017), Nero (2006, 2014), Skerrett (2012, 2015), Skerrett & Omogun (2020), Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco (2009/2001), Wallace (2017a, 2017b, 2022), Waters et al. (2014), and Watson & Knight-Manuel (2017), among others, who have examined areas such as the Englishes, literacies, multiliteracies, cultures, acculturation processes, race, ethnicity, online literacy practices, digital literacies, and religious literacies of (Black) Black immigrant and transnational peoples and youth.

Through the nuanced decolonizing approach deployed, a portrait is painted of how Black immigrant youth use their self-determination to reclaim linguistic innocence and work towards imagined presents and futures even while simultaneously describing how institutional factors raciolinguistically and raciosemiotically influence their literacies. As a result of the engagement with

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these lenses, the fields of language and literacy are invited, with urgency, to extend a disruption of dichotomies long undergirding distinctions between the *academic* vs. *invisible* literacies of youth. The reader is invited to extend beyond tensions concerning such dichotomies regarding literacy and to focus instead on notions such as "language architecture" (Flores, 2020) and "raciosemiotic architecture" – "*imaj ògannizasyon wapò ant sé diféwan was*" (Smith, 2022d) as well as their affordances for understanding the multiliteracies of Black immigrant, and all youth. Making visible an awareness of instances where non-standardized and standardized Englishes and other semiotic resources of Black immigrant youth may be racialized, through language as well as *imaj ògannizasyon wapò ant sé diféwan was* (Smith, 2022d), this book extends the current scholarly focus regarding Black immigrants, Black immigrant youth, and their literacies, raising questions about how a raciolinguistic perspective potentially functions as a basis for more accurately representing the literacies and translanguaging of immigrant youth of Color in the US. Juxtaposing how youth's Englishes and literacies are negotiated through the lens of the white listening subject regardless of their efforts to persistently contest such ideologies against the reclamation of their lost translanguaging imaginaries, I empower those who work with Black youth and with all youth of Color, to dismantle and create institutional structures that reduce the burden imposed on *all* youth to navigate inescapable tensions surrounding languaging and semiotizing. By extension, exemplars from the "authentic narratives" – unsanitized stories presented in the voice of youth – allow for a reclaiming of the voices of Black peoples everywhere and throughout time (Smith, 2023b).

Much like Paulo Freire (1970/2000), whose broad challenge to the tendency in the educational enterprise to remain immersed in an oppressor vs. oppressed dynamic, as alluded to earlier, resulted in the envisioning of "a new being: no longer oppressor nor longer oppressed, but human in the process of achieving freedom" (Freire, 1970/2000, p. 1) emerging through the dialectic, the "both-and" (Smith, 2013) approach to translanguaging undergirding this book responds to the critical question posed by Alim (2005) with regards to raciolinguistics, which is:

> By what processes are we all involved in the construction and maintenance of a "standard" language, and further, that the "standard" is somehow better, more intelligent, more appropriate, more important, etc. than other varieties? In other words, how, when and why are we all implicated in linguistic supremacy? (p. 194)

Extending this question posed by Alim (2005) I also ask, *In what ways are the literate repertoires of all, as are those of Black humans, restricted by the implications of linguistic and semiotic supremacy?* And also, *In what ways is linguistic and semiotic supremacy, as a function of being immigrant and Black, capable of illustrating the ways in which such supremacy, by default,*

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handicaps all humans? In doing so, I hope to liberate thinking about how Black immigrant literacies can serve as a vehicle for building solidarity within and across racial groups, many of whom have for so long erroneously believed that white supremacy works *only* against the interest of Blacks, Black immigrants, and of migrant people of Color. At the same time, I demonstrate how Black immigrant youth sustain their self-determination and thrive while simultaneously foregrounding the role of institutions in revamping raciolinguicized and raciosemiotized policies that come to bear on the literate and languaging repertoires of Black Caribbean immigrant youth.

Organization of the Book

To facilitate ease of reading, this book is organized into seven chapters. Chapter 1, the Introduction, provides an overview of the ideas undergirding the content presented across the book. The Introduction also includes definitions of key constructs used in the book and presents the organizing structure of the book. Chapter 2 presents the rationale for focusing on the lens of Black immigrant literacies as a basis for this book and provides the reader with an overview of the broad and long-standing body of research on language and literacy in the US that has emerged as a backdrop against which Black Caribbean languaging and literacies of migration are considered. Discussing the colonial imperatives across the Black diaspora influencing education and language use in Black immigrants' countries of origin that necessitate a legitimization of "Englishes" as languages, the chapter situates Afro-Caribbean languaging, Englishes, and literacies within its broader contexts by presenting a discussion of education, migration, and cultures while addressing the historical and contemporary educational landscape of Black people in the Caribbean. It also engages in a discussion of the historical and contemporary socio-educational landscape of Black immigrants in the US. Chapter 3 acknowledges the intertwined histories of Afro-Caribbean languaging, Englishes, and literacies across the Black diaspora. In doing so, the chapter attends to the long legacy of languaging emerging out of the Black race and reaching across the Black diaspora while also lamenting the *invented illiteracy* often imposed in the characterizations of Black peoples worldwide. Acknowledging the traditional lineage of '*Diaspora Literacy*' in making visible interconnections across Black peoples within and beyond the US, the chapter presents Caribbean Englishes, describing the languaging, Englishes, and literacies of English-speaking Afro-Caribbean students in the Caribbean and in the US. Calling for a silencing of the historical tradition of invented illiteracy used to characterize Black peoples across the diaspora and inviting a strengthening of accessible knowledges surrounding the rich literate and linguistic heritages they inherently possess, this chapter makes clear the broader transnational contexts influencing racialized translanguaging and transsemiotizing in Black immigrant literacies. Chapter 4

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presents the conceptual framework for understanding the perspectives used as lenses to examine Black immigrant literacies in the book. The chapter discusses key elements of the theoretical framework: multiliteracies, translanguaging, raciolinguistics, language architecture, and raciosemiotic architecture. Together, the lenses of multiliteracies, translanguaging, a raciolinguistic perspective, language, and raciosemiotic architecture make it possible to examine the literacies of migration undergirding the translanguaging imaginaries of innocence of Black Caribbean youth. Chapter 5 provides the reader with a depiction of the methodology involved in conducting the study of Black immigrant youth's literacies undergirding this book. The chapter begins with my situatedness in the study as a Black immigrant and transnational single-parent-scholar-mother-educator. It then presents a description of the decolonizing interpretive research design steeped in '*critical dialectical pluralism*' used to examine the literacies of migration of Black Caribbean youth. The chapter presents the procedures undergirding interpretive analyses of the data as they relate to the multiliteracies, translanguaging practices, raciolinguistic and raciosemiotic ideologies in the lives of six Black Caribbean immigrant youth. Chapter 6 presents the findings that illustrate how the literacies of Black Caribbean immigrant youth are enacted. Based on these findings, the chapter discusses elements of the heuristic of "*semiolingual innocence*," proposed to clarify understandings about how elements of multiliteracies, translanguaging, raciolinguistic ideologies, and raciosemiotic architecture – *imaj ògannizasyon wapò ant sé diféwan was* – intersect to clarify the literacies and translanguaging of the Black Caribbean immigrant youth. In turn, eight elements are presented, which characterize the heuristic, as mechanisms for reinscribing the semiolingual innocence of all youth. Chapter 7 synthesizes insights from the book and makes recommendations for researchers, teachers, administrators, and policymakers who wish to support Black Caribbean as well as Black Caribbean immigrant and transnational youth's holistic literacies via "*imaginaries of innocence*" – "*imajinè inosan*" or "*entépwétasyon sosyal di inosans*" – based on the role of these youth as language and raciosemiotic architects. In doing so, it invites the field to consider futuristic notions for enacting just presents such as "*liberatory Caribbean imaginaries*" that can instantiate our envisioning of the much needed "new beings" so aptly called for by Paulo Freire so long ago (Freire, 1970/2000). The chapter also invites a broader attention to translanguaging as it functions intralinguistically, often in Englishes, via the semiolingual repertoires of all youth.

A National and Global Imperative

Black immigrants currently account for about 9 percent of America's 42.4 million immigrants – a four-fold increase compared to the number of immigrants in 1980 and an estimated four million Black immigrants subsumed within the broader US immigrant population (Zong & Batalova, 2019). The

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US Census Bureau (2013) projects that by 2060, 16.5 percent of US Blacks will be immigrants. These realities make it clear that understanding, addressing, and leveraging the literacies of this population is critical. The timeliness and relevance of this book are even more compelling considering what Portes (2019) refers to as American immigration policy that signals "the *end of compassion* [emphasis added] and the consequent loss of the country's unique moral stature in the world" (Portes, 2019, p. 2). Debates surrounding immigration, both nationally and globally, as well as national movements dedicated to the opposition of Blackness in the US (Dancy et al., 2018; Sexton, 2018) present evidence that immigration and race discourses both come to bear directly on Black immigrant youth and reinforce the dire need for mechanisms to support these youth and how they use their literacies to navigate inequities in and beyond classrooms. And "*immigrant of Color literacies*" (Smith, 2020b, p. 12) steeped in translanguaging imaginaries of innocence are becoming increasingly central to present and futuristic notions of overall well-being and thriving in a 'post-pandemic' world – "*flourishing*" (Keyes, 2002).

As Amanda Gorman observed in the now famous inaugural poem, "The Hill We Climb," "*We will not be turned around or interrupted by intimidation because we know our inaction and inertia will be the inheritance of the next generation, become the future*" (Gorman, 2021). Clarifying how *imaginaries of Inonsans Jan Nwè:* as articulated in the translanguaging and literate practices of Black immigrant youth in this book interrupts the temptation to indulge in inaction and inertia that threaten our collective futures. The discussions that follow will prove critical to instantiating *imagiscapes* – *imaginary landscapes* – of flourishing that support solidarity among Black populations and beyond.

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